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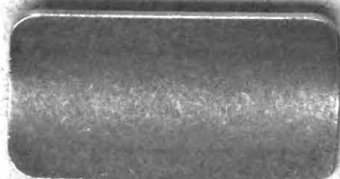
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Memoir of George
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MEMOIR

OF

GEORGE B. WOOD, M.D., LL.D.,

BY

HENRY HARTSHORNE, A.M., M.D.

(Read before the American Philosophical Society, October 11, 1880.)

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Memoir of GEORGE B. WOOD, M.D., LL.D.,

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With a long life, not much varied in events, nor brilliant in deeds that meet the public eye, Dr. George B. Wood may be named as one who, in the main features, and, indeed, in almost every particular of his career, has left an example worthy of admiration and emulation. It will be acknowledged by the least enthusiastic of his friends and associates, that he was one of the most useful men of his generation.

He was born at Greenwich, in New Jersey, in the year 1797. His own memoranda of his ancestry are not devoid of historical interest in connection with the early settlement of this city, as well as that of our neighboring State. It appears that Richard Wood, a member of the Society of Friends, came to this country with William Penn in 1682, bringing with him his son James, and settled in the northern part of the then new city of Philadelphia; where Wood street probably received its name from him. There is reason to believe that while James Wood remained in the city, another younger son or sons of Richard Wood went to New Jersey, locating themselves in Salem and

Gloucester counties ; Woodstown and Woodbury being, in all probability, named after them.

Farther back, in Gloucester, England, traces have been found of the family annals, through the Woods of Brockrup in the 16th, and of Gobrill in the 15th century, to a still earlier period, when their predecessors inhabited for many successive years the ancient Court-House of Gloucester ; now, long since, converted into a farm. Late in Dr. Wood's life, he was informed of the decease of a very wealthy banker, named James Wood, in Gloucester, England, without direct heirs. Legal gentlemen called upon Dr. Wood, proposing to dispute this banker's will, in his favor, as a collateral heir ; the property having been left to an alderman named Wood, in London. While declining this proposition, Dr. Wood remarked upon it as follows : " Had the existence of such relations been known to Mr. Wood, and especially had accident brought us into close intimacy or association, it is not improbable that he might have preferred persons of his own blood as the heirs of his fortune, to one whose only claim upon him was the name of Wood, and a few flattering attentions."

Two sons of James Wood of Philadelphia, above mentioned, early in the 18th century left this city to settle in Southern New Jersey ; probably under the auspices of Thomas Chalkley, a prominent member and preacher of the Society of Friends ; who contemplated founding, upon the banks of the Cohansey river,

a great city which might rival Philadelphia. Before that time, as early as 1683, the same design had been formed by John Fenwick, who became Proprietor of West New Jersey by conveyance from Lord Berkeley, successor to the Duke of York, afterwards James II., who was grantee of the Crown. Fenwick left a will, directing a city to be erected near the Cohansey, which he willed thereafter to be called Cæsarian river. All that followed this large project, however, has been the growth of the small town or agricultural village of Greenwich.

Dr. Wood kept in his possession a deed, signed by the agent of William Penn, who acted as executor of John Fenwick, conveying a lot of ground forming a part of his Greenwich farm.

In each generation, the heads of this family in New Jersey have been men of consideration and local distinction. Richard Wood, the father of the subject of this memoir, was a man of superior mind and strong character, much respected by all who knew him. He was described by an acquaintance, speaking of him to Dr. Wood, as "a prince of a man." He married twice. His second wife, mother of George Bacon Wood, was Elizabeth Bacon, of Bacon's Neck, New Jersey. Of the early settlement of her family in that part of the country, evidence is preserved. One or two memoranda may be here interesting: "1683, June 25th, Shank-anum and Et-hoe, Indians, convey to John Nichols, of Nichols' Hartford, near Cohansey, 100 acres of land,

part of the tract known to the Indians as Cat-a-nun-gut, adjoining lands of Samuel Bacon and others."

"1685, August 12th, John Nichols and wife convey 100 acres of land to John Bacon of Cohansey."

George B. Wood was the eldest son of Richard and Elizabeth Bacon Wood. At twelve years of age, his earnest desire for a liberal education was gratified by his father sending him to school in New York. When sufficiently prepared, he was transferred to the University of Pennsylvania, where he was graduated, with honors, in 1815.

Of his early life I have obtained but little particular account, beyond what is preserved in his own manuscripts. These show a very active mind, more alive with imagination and sentiment than would have been supposed by those acquainted only with his later labors. He wrote, between 1813 and 1825, many verses, mostly in English, some in Latin; amongst the former, several translations from the German of Schiller. With the German language, as well as the French and Italian, he acquired considerable familiarity; which was of use not only in his later arduous professional studies, but also in his very diversified general reading, and European travel. His library contained many books in foreign languages. It may surprise some who have known him as a most industrious student, and the author of ponderous medical works, to learn that he read quite a large number of novels; especially during his summer vacations. More remarkable

still, he planned, and wrote the greater part of a novel of his own ; which I have seen in manuscript. It was never published.

Amongst the papers above referred to there is, under the date of 1814, "An Oration spoken before the Citizens of Philadelphia, on the Independence of the United States." This was delivered a year before his graduation at the University. In the year 1817, he contributed to Poulson's American Daily Advertiser a very spirited reply to an aspersion upon the Society of Friends, charging its members with a want of charity outside of their own borders, which had been published in the Portfolio of that day. The editor of the latter periodical replied, withdrawing, or essentially modifying, his injurious expressions.

Upon leaving the Collegiate Department of the University, young Wood began the study of Medicine as the office student of Dr. Joseph Parrish. His advantages there were decidedly superior ; and he availed himself of them so well as to become, after his graduation in Medicine at the University in 1818, his preceptor's associate in giving instruction to students. A private medical school grew out of this association ; in which a number of our most eminent physicians and surgeons, of the generation now passing away, took part, first as pupils, and some of them afterwards as instructors. Under such circumstances, Dr. Wood matured those convictions upon practical medicine and medical ethics which he inculcated through his whole

life ; and which, during the forty-two years of his continuous labors as a medical professor and clinical teacher, were spread broadcast throughout this country. No one man has ever done so much as he, to form and influence medical opinion in America upon both practical and ethical questions. Well has it been for the profession, that his teaching was dictated by good judgment, careful study, and, above all, the highest principles of rectitude and honor.

Dr. Wood's first course of lectures was one upon chemistry, delivered to a non-professional audience, chiefly composed of ladies, in Dr. Joseph Parrish's private office. Here, in a lay course, as Dr. Littell observes, in a *Memoir** to which I am much indebted for information, "before a class entranced by his carefully prepared experiments and not likely to be hypercritical in its judgments, he gained confidence and dexterity, and was thereby better fitted to perform his part in a more formal and important sphere." There was a tradition amongst medical students and others, that Dr. Wood was not, at the beginning of his work as a teacher, an easy, fluent or graceful speaker. It is entirely accordant with what we know of his whole life, to suppose that this may have been true ; and that his having become, in maturity, one of the most admirable and successful lecturers of his time was due far less to any natural gift of eloquence than to assiduous and long continued exercise and cultivation of his powers.

*Read before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, October 1, 1879.

Shortly after the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy was founded, in 1821, Dr. Wood was invited to become its Professor of Chemistry. He accepted the position, and held it, with success and popularity, from 1822 to 1831, when he was transferred to the Chair of *Materia Medica* in the same institution.

In 1835, when the Chair of *Materia Medica* in the University of Pennsylvania (before held by Dr. John Redman Coxe) became vacant, Dr. Wood was elected to occupy it. I have had before me a letter addressed by him, during the canvass, to James S. Smith, one of the Trustees of the University, at the request of the latter, in which, with modesty and yet with distinctness, he sets forth some of the reasons, growing out of his abundant preparation, for his claim of eligibility to the chair. He mentions in this letter the fact, that during the year 1829 he devoted all his leisure for nine months, in conjunction with Drs. Hewson and Bache, acting as a Committee of the College of Physicians, to the revisal of the *Pharmacopœia* of the United States. So many alterations were found to be required, that it was necessary to rewrite almost the whole work. Before the Committee was satisfied, Dr. Wood states that he had written all of the manuscript copy at least twice over with his own hand. Through its subsequent adoption by a National Convention at Washington in 1830, this *Pharmacopœia* became the standard authority for the preparation of official medicines throughout the United States; and it

has so continued, with repeated revisals, down to the present time. Not long after completing this important work, Professor Wood began, with Professor Franklin Bache, aided for a time by Daniel B. Smith, then President of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, a very elaborate commentary upon the Pharmacopœia, under the name of the United States Dispensatory. This, which made a volume of more than a thousand large and closely printed pages, was begun and finished by its authors in less than two years. It has, since that time, passed through fourteen large editions; the aggregate number of copies sold, during Dr. Wood's life-time, amounting to 120,000 copies; as it has long been regarded as everywhere indispensable to both the medical and the pharmaceutical professions. The intimate association of Doctors Wood and Bache, in the preparation of this most useful work of reference, was only a part of the fabric of their life-long fraternal friendship. This close intimacy was the more remarkable on account of their being opposed in interest as professors in the two great rival medical schools; that of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia.

In the professorship of *Materia Medica* and *Therapeutics* in the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Wood reached the culmination of his reputation as a public Teacher. He was one of the leaders in that great reform in instruction upon scientific subjects, which

has now become universal; in which illustration and demonstration, by the constant presentation of objects to the sight, are prominent and essential. His courses of lectures upon *Materia Medica* may be truly said to have been splendid, almost magnificent; adorned as well as made complete for the students' information, by the exhibition, from day to day, of living specimens of medicinal plants from all quarters of the world, grown in his own private conservatory and botanical garden, maintained for this special purpose. When such could not at the time be obtained, fine pictorial representations were placed before the class in their stead; and his cabinet of mineral and other crude and prepared specimens was correspondingly complete. A printed syllabus of the course of lectures, interleaved for note-taking, was furnished gratuitously by him to each student. It may be said, indeed, that no portion of the curriculum of the Medical Department of the University, able and renowned as have been the other members or its Faculty, ever added more to the great reputation and large classes of that institution, than this model course. Dr. Wood continued to hold the Chair of *Materia Medica* and Therapeutics until 1850, when he was transferred to that of the Theory and Practice of Medicine, upon the retirement from the latter of Professor Nathaniel Chapman. This chair he retained until 1860, when he withdrew from all active professional labors.

Among other literary contributions of the earlier



portion of Dr. Wood's professional life, one not without importance was, his taking prominent part in the editorship of the North American Medical and Surgical Journal. This quarterly periodical attained the highest standing, being conducted by a number of gentlemen of ability and learning; although it gave way, after a few years, to a successor in the same field, under circumstances more favorable to a permanent existence.

In 1835, Professor Wood was appointed one of the attending physicians to the Pennsylvania Hospital. The duties of this responsible post he performed, with unremitting faithfulness, until the year 1859. His clinical lectures in that institution, to numerous classes of medical students, were admirable. Great improvements in the methods of ascertaining conditions of internal disease, and especially in the physical diagnosis of affections of the lungs and heart, were brought hither from Europe after Dr. Wood had begun his career as a medical teacher. Having no ultra-conservatism in regard to novelties, he applied himself to the practical study of auscultation and percussion; so as to become proficient in their bedside use. Not content, however, with his own skill in these newer methods, he availed himself, not unfrequently, of the assistance of the late Dr. W. W. Gerhard, with whom they were a specialty, in the diagnosis of cases under his care in the Hospital. It was one of Dr. Wood's characteristics, that, in his earnest and conscientious so-

licitude for the interests of his patients and pupils, he was always ready to supplement and extend the advantages of his own personal instruction, by engaging, upon the most liberal terms, the services of others in particular departments. This was constantly done by him in regard to his own private students, of whom, until about the year 1855, he always had a large class. Several of our most distinguished physicians, now leading practitioners and professors, can look back with grateful reminiscences to the hours advantageously spent, in review of their University studies, as Professor Wood's office pupils.

No event in Dr. Wood's life was of more cardinal importance to him than his marriage ; which took place in 1823, to Caroline, only daughter of Peter Hahn, a wealthy merchant of Philadelphia. Congenial, domestic in her tastes, and devoted in her attachment to him, she was able, also, by her receipt of large means from her father, to secure her husband in an independent position in the world. Some men would have availed themselves of this, to withdraw from care and toil of every kind, and to enjoy their leisure in travel and in social or literary recreation. Not so with Dr. Wood; while generous, and sometimes even stately, in his mode of living, he employed the resources placed within his reach mainly in enlarging and improving his processes of instruction ; into which, as well as into the composition of his books, he threw all the energy of his nature. It was a familiar fact to his contemporaries in

the medical profession, that the neediest practitioner, lecturer or author among them all, seldom worked so hard, and so incessantly, as Dr. Wood. The motives which sustained him in these laborious habits, were, evidently, not at all a desire to accumulate farther wealth, but a love for his pursuits, *per se*; a very earnest purpose of usefulness to his fellow-men; and, it may be, a not ignoble valuation of his own reputation.

Although without offspring, the companionship of his excellent wife was to him a constant source of happiness, until her death in 1865. With this loss, following that of Dr. Bache in 1864, began the decline of Dr. Wood's vigor, which slowly, and almost insensibly, proceeded, until his decease in the Spring of 1879.

In 1847, before his transfer to the Professorship of Practice of Medicine in the University, he published his great treatise, in two volumes, on the Practice of Medicine. This was at once recognized, at home and abroad, as an authoritative work. It became a favorite text-book for students, not only in this country, but also in Great Britain. The time-honored University of Edinburgh was one of several foreign medical schools in which it was officially approved and adopted. It passed, during its author's life, through six editions.

This work was followed, in 1856, by another, also in two octavo volumes, a treatise upon Therapeutics and Pharmacology. Of this, three editions were issued; the last in 1868. In both of these works, Dr. Wood showed the most indefatigable industry and excellent

judgment, in research, selection and arrangement, of all the knowledge obtainable upon his subjects. In neither is there manifested much originality of invention, discovery or suggestion. Exception may, however, be made to some extent upon this last point, so far as to say that he always exhibited great readiness, and sometimes ingenuity, in accounting for things which, to many others, seemed difficult to explain. I never knew him to be without a probable hypothesis, when one was wanted for such a purpose, whether in pathology or therapeutics, or in social or political affairs.

Dr. Wood's mental outlook was, indeed, far from being narrow, or in any sense restricted to matters connected with his own profession. He was earnestly and actively interested, for several years, in the establishment of Girard College according to the designs of its endowment. There is amongst his papers, in connection with this, a communication to the *Philadelphia Courier and Enquirer* of the date of Monday, Dec. 28, 1840, a really eloquent appeal to the citizens of Philadelphia, signed "Girard;" in which the philanthropist is personated as calling from his grave upon those to whom his trust had been confided, to end their long delay in the fulfilment of his cherished purposes for the benefit of the orphans of the City and State of his adoption. A few words from this paper may be here not inappropriately cited, as an example of its author's style.

"I entreat you," he writes, "by our former fellow-

ship and by all the good which I have intended for you and your children, I require of you by the obligation of an accepted trust, I conjure you by the terrors of a wounded conscience and a retributive judgment, to guard faithfully the sacred pledge which I have deposited with you. Should any one attempt to violate its sanctity, and abuse it for some unholy purpose, let him feel the weight of your indignant reproof. Should a public servant dare to propose a dishonorable application of it to your own wants or necessities, frown him into that contempt which every pander merits. If injury has accrued from former neglect, do all that you can to remedy the past and to guard the future."

In presenting this appeal to the public, after nine years had elapsed without any application of Stephen Girard's legacy to the education of orphans, it was understood that its author represented, although informally, the wishes of the Trustees of the College.

Shortly afterwards, Dr. Wood, as chairman of a committee of the same Board of Trustees, prepared a formal communication to the Select and Common Councils of Philadelphia, urging immediate action to carry out the provisions of Girard's will, by legal enactments and appropriations. The result of this conflict, however, between the Councils and the Board, was the dissolution of the latter, of which Nicholas Biddle was then President; and, also, the termination of the official connection with the College of its first President, Alexander Dallas Bache.

An important contribution was made, also, by Dr. Wood, to the organization of Girard College, in the form of a report of a committee of which he was chairman, upon the clothing, diet, etc., of its orphan pupils. This report comprised a brief but clear and systematic statement of the principles essential to the healthy conduct of such an establishment; such as, if carried out, must have secured to it from the start, excellent sanitary conditions.

Among other subjects upon which Dr. Wood wrote well, as he did, upon all topics which interested him at all, was that of the Temperance reform. He contributed to the *United States Review*, in January, 1834, an article about fifty pages in length, on the "Temperance Cause." His views, in this article, were *advanced* for that day, although confined to an exposition of the evils attending the use of ardent spirits as a drink, and of immoderate indulgence in the use of fermented beverages. That, with longer reflection and experience, his mind did not greatly change upon this subject, was shown by a note appended by him to a reprint of the above mentioned article, in 1872. "Were our efforts confined," he there says, "to the exclusion of ardent spirit or distilled liquors from use, there might be some hope of success in the end; as a people among whom temperance could be established, with this limitation, could never, so long as the rule continued, become a nation of drunkards."

It may be remarked that Dr. Wood's retired position

in his later life may have debarred him from a close acquaintance with that pressure of facts in regard to the effects of intemperance in our own and other countries, which, with the evidence that the limitation which he urged cannot be anywhere extensively carried out, has brought many cautious minds in our time to conclude, that, to control what seems, next to war, the chief destroyer of modern nations, no prohibition, no personal or general sacrifice can be too great. It may be proper to say here, also, that, in his own way of life, Dr. Wood, while very fond of hospitality, and making his house a favorite social centre, especially for the members of his own profession, was a marked instance of the benefits of that temperance which he so ably defended and enjoined.

Historical composition always had a great attraction for Dr. Wood. In the two volumes of his *Memoirs, Lectures and Addresses*, published, the one in 1859, and the other in 1872, we find the following papers expressly of that character :

History of Materia Medica; History of Materia Medica in the United States; Sketch of the History of the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania; History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, delivered at the centennial celebration of its foundation, with a supplement to this, delivered at the laying, in 1856, of the corner-stone of the new Penna. Hospital for the Insane; and a *History of Christianity in India*.

The last named of these historical memoirs was part

of a larger plan of a *History of India*, conceived by its author in early life, and abandoned on account of the demands made upon his time by his professional duties. The eleven chapters which were completed make more than a hundred pages of the volume of *Memoirs, &c.*, published by him in 1872. There is added, also, as a supplement, an Address on the British East India Empire, which was delivered by Professor Wood before the Athenian Institute of Philadelphia, January 23d, 1839. From the latter, we may take, as bearing upon a topic whose interest to the world at large is increasing every year, the following concluding reflections :

“But,” it is there written, “the fortunes of India and Great Britain are not to be forever united. The English themselves, even those who have labored most assiduously in the consolidation of the Indian Empire, look forward to an ultimate separation. They look forward to the time, when, through the agency of causes brought to bear upon the people of India by their present political relations, they will have become enlightened, refined, elevated in sentiment and conduct ; when the adoption of a pure religion will have cleansed away the moral foulness which now corrupts every spring of action ; when their long union under one common government will have given them a feeling of political identity, a spirit of nationality and patriotism, which may lead them to desire independence, for which their expanded intelligence and purer morality shall have fitted them. When thus ripe for self-government,

may we not reasonably hope, that India will fall off spontaneously and peaceably from her long attachment, and, either as one or as several people, take her place in that brotherhood of nations, which, in America, in Africa, and in Australasia, will have owed their origin or civilization directly or indirectly to Great Britain, and will continue to revere the name and cherish the institutions of this mother of empires, when she herself shall have fallen into the decrepitude of age, or have gone to join her predecessors in the realms of history?"

A number of Biographical Memoirs, also, were written by Dr. Wood. We find, in his first volume, a memoir of Dr. Joseph Parrish, and one of Dr. Samuel George Morton; in the second volume, of Dr. Franklin Bache, of Frederick Beasley, D.D., and of Dr. James L. Fisher. All but one of these were prepared either for the American Philosophical Society, or for the College of Physicians, or the Medical Society of Philadelphia.

Of scientific contributions by Dr. Wood to the Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, I find record of four. The first of these was delivered as an address to the Society, in 1860, his second year of service as its President, upon "Dangers of Hasty Generalization in Science." It exemplified, as well as inculcated, that cautious, although never timid spirit, which becomes the true philosopher; which welcomes the appearance of every promising novelty,

in science or in art, but always refuses to accept it simply because it is new; which believes everything which is proven by sufficient evidence, but nothing without evidence, whatever its attraction to the fancy, the intellect, or even the moral sense.

Dr. Wood's other papers, published in the Proceedings of this Society, were upon the subject of his observations and experiments, carried on through several years, upon his farm at Greenwich, in regard to the fertilizing and renewing action of the alkali potassa on the growth of fruit-trees, potatoes, wheat and other plants. The addition of wood ashes empirically to certain soils under cultivation, has long been a common practice in many places. By the chemical analysis of plants and of the earth in which they grow, as Dr. Wood mentions, their mutual physiological relations have, especially since the investigations of Liebig, been generally understood. But the merit of Dr. Wood's observations is, that they have furnished means of definite experimental demonstration, upon a considerable scale, of the practical application of this part of the chemical physiology of plants, in a manner productive of direct agricultural and horticultural profit.

Every inquiry of such a kind is, of course, of a complex nature, and the inferences derived from it must be properly collated and correlated with other facts and laws, which may qualify both their interpretation and their application. But the scientific and practical value of such investigations is beyond doubt; espe-

cially when carried on with the patience, carefulness and candor which attended those which have been thus briefly recorded.

Dr. Wood's professional eminence and personal qualifications led, naturally and suitably, to his being called to high official positions. In 1848, he was elected President of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia; an office which remained with him thereafter until his death. In 1855, he was made President of the American Medical Association; and in 1859, President of the American Philosophical Society. In this last position, he followed, after an interval of some years, Dr. Nathaniel Chapman. Both of these appointments may be regarded as not only altogether appropriate on account of the high individual merits of those who received them, but, also, as evincing a recognition of the relation of the medical profession to the general advancement of science, to which medical men here, as elsewhere, have rendered such large and numerous contributions; besides exemplifying, in their own vocation, the principle that science lives and works most fitly, not for its own intellectual aims alone, but also for the common benefit of humanity.

In 1870, Dr. Wood was disposed to retire from all official duties, on account of his advancing age and infirmity. On the occasion of his tendering his resignation of the Presidency of the American Philosophical Society, its Secretaries were authorized, as a committee, to request its withdrawal. In the communication

addressed to him in regard to it by them, he was assured on behalf of the members of the Society, that all continued to recognize him as "the most worthy representative it could have, not only where it holds its meetings, but in its correspondence with other learned bodies like itself."

After his retirement from active service in the Chair of Theory and Practice of Medicine in the University of Pennsylvania, he was made Emeritus Professor. He became also, soon afterwards, a member of the Board of Trustees of the University. In that Board, as Chairman of its Committee on the Medical Department, he exercised for many years an influence upon its affairs more important, perhaps, than that of any other individual member.

His distinctions were not confined to his own city. The College of New Jersey bestowed upon him the degree of LL.D. Besides being made honorary or corresponding member of the New York Academy of Medicine, and the Medical Societies of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the same honor was conferred upon him by the *Société de Pharmacie* of Paris, the *Medico-Chirurgical Society* of Edinburgh, the *Royal College of Physicians* of Dublin; the *Silesian Society for Native Culture* of Breslau, *L'Accademia de' Quiriti* of Rome, and the *Societas Cæsarea Naturæ Curiosorum* of Moscow, Russia. He attended, as a guest, two meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1848 and 1861. In the

former year, he was appointed delegate from the American Medical Association to the meeting, at Bath, of the British Medical Association. At his reception on this occasion, when his credentials were read, complimentary resolutions were passed, and the whole assembly rose to greet him, as the accredited and honored representative of his profession in America. During his last visit to England, in 1861, appropriate official and social courtesies were extended to him, as President of the American Philosophical Society, and of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, by the officers and members of the Royal Society, and of the College of Surgeons and Physicians in London.

Three journeys to Europe were made by Dr. Wood, in 1848, 1853, and 1860-61-62. He visited in turn nearly all the principal countries of Europe, including Russia. Nor were these, to him, tours only of idle amusement or mere recreation. His natural and acquired industry, his real love of work as well as of knowledge, induced him to study carefully, sometimes almost exhaustively, every place and object of interest. Many volumes of his Journals of Travels have been preserved. They are very systematically written, and contain more valuable information, clearly and tersely conveyed, than most popular books by famous voyagers. A scientific note book was also kept by him, upon some particular subjects of interest and importance. Full, often elaborately detailed accounts

of his observations are given, of the most varied things and places ; as, for example, the Museum of Northern Antiquities at Copenhagen, to the description of whose contents he gives fifteen letter-size pages of his Journal ; the geological structure and indications of the banks of the Tiber ; art galleries and the carnival in Rome ; vineyards and vine culture near Perugia, on the way from Rome to Florence ; the Lariborsière Hospital at Paris ; the great International Exhibition at London ; the reception of a deputation of philanthropists by Lord Palmerston ; and the annual dinner of the British Medical Association. One of the pleasing minor incidents of his last visit to London, was the refusal of the proprietor of a leading drug establishment in that city to receive payment from him for some rather expensive medicines, on account of the services rendered to himself by Dr. Wood in his writings.

Some important concerns of the American Philosophical Society received careful and judicious attention from him during his journeys abroad. Among these were, his promotion, by personal address and correspondence with our Minister at St. Petersburg, of the donation to the Society of one of the copies of the reprint, authorized by the Emperor of Russia, of the Sinaitic Codex of the New Testament, brought to Europe by Professor Tischendorf. While in Paris, also, he found it necessary to devote some time to the affair of the Michaux legacy to this Society ; which was then complicated by the reluctance of Madame Beziers,

widow of Michaux, to carry out, as desired, some of the required arrangements.

Our great civil war was going on during the last absence of Dr. Wood in Europe. Every mail brought news of battles, sometimes with reverses and sometimes successes, of the Union arms. So patriotic a man could not fail to be much moved by these events; and his Journal has many pages filled with reflections upon them, and the expression of his anxious solicitude for his country during its perils. There is interest in these expressions, as those of a sagacious man, looking forward as well as backward, at the career of this great Republic, then passing through its ordeal of fire. In 1861, he was, with others, much exercised about the possibility, at one time threatening, of Great Britain interfering to the advantage of the Secessionists. He predicts as the result of such an unwarranted action, certain disaster, if not ruin, to England; through advantage being taken by France, under Napoleon III., of the opportunity thus afforded to provoke new conflicts, not improbably ending in a general European war.

Confidently anticipating, at the beginning of 1862, the final, if not speedy triumph of the forces of the Union, he saw very distinctly at that period, the later prospect, which he indicated in these words: "But the problem appears to me much more difficult, what is to be done with the South when conquered, than will be the task of conquest." The plan which he favored

was one which many others have approved; perhaps more even now than at the close of the war, since the trial of a different but imperfectly successful policy; namely, "the establishment, in the States which had forfeited their rights under the Constitution, of provisional governments, with officers appointed by the President and Senate, and under regulations prescribed by Congress, until, by a gradual amendment in the character or material of the population they shall be again fitted to govern themselves as constituent parts of the Union."

Another, and still nearer, cause of anxiety began, early in the same year, to throw, as he wrote in his Journal, a deep shadow over Dr. Wood's future. This was the discovery that a cancerous tumor was beginning to threaten his wife's health and life. His plans of travel were altered in consequence. A voyage to Athens, Constantinople and Egypt was given up; and after some farther stay in Italy, the party traveled slowly toward Paris.

There, after careful surgical consultation, in April, 1862, the operation of excision was skilfully performed by the veteran surgeon, Velpeau, assisted by Nélaton, and Dr. Beylard, then of Paris, but formerly of Philadelphia. Dr. Wood's feeling upon the subject of his wife's illness and suffering was expressed thus in his Journal: "She and my country are the objects nearest my heart; and, if I know myself, I would willingly give up my own life, could I thereby secure the continued

enjoyment of life and happiness to either." Her life was prolonged, with tolerable health for a considerable period, until 1865.

Before Dr. Wood's embarkation upon his last journey abroad, in 1860, a farewell public dinner was given him by the members of the medical profession in Philadelphia, in testimony of their high respect, esteem and affection. The venerable and distinguished Dr. La Roche presided. The occasion was one of unusual interest. No physician in Philadelphia was ever more, if ever one so much, looked up to by those of all ranks and ages, as truly the head, the patriarch* of the medical profession in America.

At the time of his death, in 1879, Dr. Wood was a few days more than eighty-two years of age. On the subject of his funeral, I must cite the words of Dr. Littell, in his memoir, already mentioned: "His remains, followed by a long train of sorrowing friends, were silently interred at Laurel Hill, as the manner of Friends is to bury.† Not a word was uttered, not a note was heard, either at the house or at the grave. All instinctively felt that fulsome panegyric or trite remark would be alike out of place on such an occasion. They came 'to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.' But

* This expression was applied by Dr. Wood himself, in 1850, to his predecessor, Dr. Nathaniel Chapman. It may be said to be still preserved to Philadelphia, in the person of our distinguished surgeon, Professor S. D. Gross, who has received the very highest honors on both sides of the Atlantic.

† It need scarcely, perhaps, be here noted, that fitting discourse, by ministers or others, is frequent, although not universal, at the funerals of "Friends."

though no religious rite was observed, no comforting service performed, those who were present felt none the less deeply that the object of their love and veneration—the Christian gentleman, the representative physician, the knight of stainless record—had been gathered to his fathers after a well-spent life, ripe with years and honors, ‘in the confidence of a certain faith, in the comfort of a reasonable, religious and holy hope, in favor with God, and in perfect charity with the world.’ ”

In person, Dr. Wood was rather tall ; until the last few years of his life slender, and very erect in carriage. His features were regular, though not striking ; he wore a peruke, and no beard. He was always dressed in black, and very neatly. His manners were dignified and formal ; his whole appearance grave and sedate. To strangers, and those of slight acquaintance, he seemed rather to repel approach, and to produce a feeling of constraint. Amongst intimate friends, however, in social intercourse, this severity was relaxed ; so that, although never demonstrative, he was quite affable, and, at times, genial. As Dr. Packard describes him, in his brief biographical sketch,* “whoever learned to know him found in him a faithful friend, a judicious counsellor, and a true man.” His uniform courtesy entitled him to be designated, as he was at the dinner given to him by the profession in 1860, “the model gentleman.” Using again some of the words of

*Transactions of the American Medical Association, 1879. .

Dr. Littell, "his purity was that of the snow or lily ; and no one in his presence ever ventured to indulge in ribald jest or unseemly remark." But once did I know him, in a long acquaintance, to be for a moment off his guard, in the measured dignity of his utterance ; and then it was under somewhat unusual provocation. It seemed not improbable, however, that he had naturally an imperious temper ; kept, upon principle, under admirable control.

His conversation was agreeable and often very instructive, though not brilliant. In one respect, he was extremely different from Dr. Nathaniel Chapman. Twice only, in very frequent professional and social intercourse, did I hear him utter a facetious remark ; and, then, it was rather the dry wit which brings a smile than the humor which compels laughter.

One of Dr. Wood's early formed habits, not uncommon, perhaps, with toilsome authors, was that of doing most of his literary work late at night. From ten o'clock until two, three or four in the morning were his usual hours for such employment. So inveterate did this become, as a "second nature" with him, that when in advanced age he laid his pen almost entirely aside, he found it impossible to return to ordinary hours. He was still obliged, almost to the last, to turn night into day, and day into the time of his repose.

Open-handed benevolence was a marked trait of Dr. Wood's character. Privately, and to public institutions, he gave largely, although always with careful

discrimination and judgment. The University of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Hospital, the Philadelphia College of Physicians, the American Philosophical Society and the Academy of Natural Sciences were the main recipients of his liberal donations during his lifetime; and several of these institutions also became principal legatees in his will.

Nor ought it to abate our appreciation of this munificent liberality, that, since his decease, the expected pecuniary value of these legacies has not been fully met, on account of the depreciation of securities,* and the inability of his cranberry plantation in New Jersey as yet to realize the large profits which he anticipated from it.

This last project, it appears needful to believe, was probably the least fortunate of Dr. Wood's undertakings. So sanguine, however, was he in regard to it, that he added for its extension a large number of acres to his farm at Greenwich, at prices larger than their owners, his neighbors, thought fit to ask of him. Here, as usual, mercenary aims were the farthest from his thoughts.

Mention has been before made, incidentally, of Dr. Wood's inclination towards a certain stateliness in his mode of living. In traveling during the summer through the State of Pennsylvania, and even in going

*His will was made in 1871, when gold was at a premium of 12½ per cent., and all other kinds of property were at a correspondingly high, if not higher range of prices, compared to those following the resumption of specie payments, and especially the depression which succeeded the "panic" of 1873.



to his farm in New Jersey, he would not unfrequently drive four-in-hand. This did not appear to be at all from affectation or love of display, for which he had no fondness; but rather from his conception of what belonged to his position in the profession and in general society, of which he was so prominent a member.

In all things, correctness, exactitude, method, and thoroughness were leading aims with Dr. Wood. These were shown above all other traits in his courses of instruction, private and public. No pains were spared to make every lecture complete, even in its smallest *minutiæ*. His manner as a lecturer was comparatively quiet, but sufficiently energetic; with enough animation always to secure attention, although never in the least approaching rhetorical excess. Others might easily obtain more admiration for their eloquence; no lecturer in the University was ever more effective, in conveying instruction and information to his classes. Especially in the abundance and excellence of the illustrations accompanying his lectures, he was in advance of almost all his contemporaries.*

In Dr. Wood's style as a writer, the same qualities of clearness and correctness were constantly manifested. If to any author, in science, philosophy, forensic or general literature, the term *faultless* may be applied, it may be to him. Nor was his manner correct

*If there was an exception to this, it was in the case of Professor Robert Hare. But he, as is well known, though a very illustrious chemist, and abounding in skilful and expensive experimentation, was not a superior lecturer.



merely; it was both elegant and forcible; varied without eccentricity, and polished, although devoid of ornament. His anniversary discourses on public occasions connected with the Pennsylvania Hospital, and his introductory and other addresses at the University, were models of their kind; and there are passages in his *History of Christianity in India*, which, without any of the brilliant adornments of a Macaulay, would not seem, in their manner, out of place upon the pages of a Bancroft or a Prescott.

His youthful ventures into the realm of poetic authorship have been already mentioned. The exact date of the composition of his longest versified work is not known to me. The copy which I possess was printed in Philadelphia, in 1864, without its author's name. It was dedicated to his wife, in language of admiration and tenderness; as the one who, as he therein says, "hast taught me how much a woman can love, and hast enabled me, through the feelings thou hast inspired, to measure the depth of affection of which the manly heart is capable."

This poem was an epic, in rhymed heroic verse, entitled, "First and Last; a Poem intended to illustrate the ways of God to man." It is divided into eighteen chapters (instead of books or cantos), making a 12mo volume of more than two hundred and fifty pages.

In reading it, one might easily forget that its author was a man of practical mundane experience and cyclopædic research, an authority in precise and applied

science. It is not without evidence of some power of imagination. Scarcely a false rhyme or incorrect measure, or even a harsh sounding line, occurs throughout. Yet it is almost equally without a spark of poetic genius. The "*mens divinator*," the Olympic gift, which comes not with any toil and is created by no strongest force of will, is wanting. Many scientists, like Sir Humphry Davy, have begun life with poetic aspirations; but no born poet, except Goethe, ever contributed important and permanent original gifts to science.* Still less, perhaps, ought we to look for the fire of genius where the whole character of a man's productions is that of great accumulation rather than of creation. Let us, then, without further criticism, accept on behalf of this epic, whose subject was the Miltonic one of the Fall of Man, and the scenes that followed it during the life-time of Adam and Eve, some of Dr. Wood's own earlier lines, written in the album of a friend, in 1831 :

"What tho' no fire celestial glows
 Along the burning line;
 Nor stream of sweetest music flows,
 Nor gems of fancy shine;
 "And even should my hand untaught
 Fail from the string to wrest
 A note responsive to the thought
 That dwells within my breast;

*The scientific mind has been more often associated with artistic than with poetic genius; as, very remarkably, in the case of Leonardo da Vinci. In our own times, Charles Kingsley and O. W. Holmes have been the most notable instances of the combination of attainments in science with great literary success.

“ Yet partial friendship to these lays
 Will not her ear refuse ;
 And, if she cannot justly praise,
 Will labour to excuse.”

Dr. Wood embodied in this epic poem his calm and deeply assured conviction of the truth and supreme importance of the Christian religion, which underlaid and supported the whole structure of his life.

A few lines from “First and Last” may suffice to set this forth :

“ Lo ! from the cross on which the Sinless died,
 How streams the light of life on every side !
 How penetrate remotest realms its rays,
 Earth’s darkest corners kindling into blaze !
 To every land the messengers of love,
 The Lord’s elect, commissioned from above,
 Bear the glad tidings ; everywhere they sow
 The seeds of truth, which, spirit-nurtured, grow
 To a rich harvest. From each center spreads
 The faith thus planted.

“ Yet, now this, now that
 Prevails. But of the two does victory wait
 Most frequently on good. By slow degrees
 Faith spreads her conquests. Over lands and seas
 Is borne the banner onward, till at last
 All nations bow before it.”

Few men, of positive belief and devout feeling, make so little outward profession of religion as did Dr. Wood. But this is not difficult to account for. Not only was he a man of much natural reserve, especially in regard to the most sacred emotions of his heart, but this disposition was promoted by circumstances. Born into membership with the Society of Friends, and

educated mainly under its influences, his formal connection with it was severed by his marriage, his wife belonging to the Lutheran communion. He joined no other body. Often attending the meetings of Friends and also not unfrequently accompanying his wife to her chosen place of worship, his religion was altogether unsectarian; but, for that, none the less real. His Journals, as well as his unprofessional published writings, manifest this clearly and often; and it was well understood by those who had the privilege of confidential intercourse with him. On one occasion, he expressed to a near relative his opinion, that the doctrine of the Society of Friends, of the immediate and perceptible guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit (acknowledged, indeed, in some manner, by other denominations, but held most definitely and strongly by them) affords the only *scientific* basis for religious belief; since it gives to the historical revelation contained in the Scriptures a confirmation exactly corresponding to that *verification by experiment* which is the characteristic of modern science, since its improvement by means of the Baconian inductive philosophy.

But we must hasten towards our conclusion. To Dr. Wood, better than to most men, might be applied the poet's line: *Iustum et tenacem propositi virum.*

If he had genius, it was a *genius for work*; a rare capacity for continued, indomitable, all-conquering labor. With this, he became an eminently successful man. As he wrote of Dr. Chapman,* "His career

* Lectures and Addresses, 1st Vol. p. 211.

throughout, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age, has been in the highest degree prosperous and flattering; if the most kindly regards, general respect, a wide social and professional influence, a reputation limited only by the bounds of civilization, and the highest positions not political which an individual can attain in this country, may be considered as evincive of prosperity and honour."

In his own words, also, addressed, in 1853, to a class of medical students, we may set forth the noble motives which animated his life:

"Do not live solely for yourself. Do not seek wealth, station, influence, merely for your own personal gratification; but consider them as means for doing good, for spreading benefits around you, and for making an impression on the world, which, when you are gone to your rewards, will cause grateful recollections to cluster about your memory, and your example to be held up to the young for imitation in all future time."

So taught, and so lived, he whom, in the full ripening of his days, we have now lost. Truly he was a philosopher, in the old, first meaning of the word: a lover, acquirer and promoter of wisdom; and, with this, of goodness also. May his memory, and the influence of his example, never pass away from amongst us!



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